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Chairman: Ms. Sandru (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)
later: Mr. Hachani (Chairman) ..... (Tunisia)

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In the absence of Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Ms. Sandru (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/53/L.6)

1. **Ms. De Álvarez** (Dominican Republic), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.6 entitled "The International Year of Older Persons, 1999" on behalf of the sponsors, announced that Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bolivia, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Guatemala, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, San Marino, South Africa, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela had joined the list of sponsors.

2. The sponsors believed that older persons were an important factor in development at all levels, and therefore in the draft resolution encouraged all States, the United Nations system and all other actors, in reaching out for a society for all ages, to take advantage of the International Year of Older Persons so as to increase awareness of the challenge of the demographic ageing of societies, the individual and social needs of older persons and the contributions of older persons to society.

3. Although there were socio-economic plans, projects, activities and initiatives in place in the Organization, practical strategies still had to be mapped out throughout the system and at national level to ensure that older people were involved in such plans and activities without discrimination of any kind. Also, to make a society for all ages a reality in the new millennium, an evaluation of the individual and collective contributions of older people should be carried out in order to eliminate preconceived ideas about older people.

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/380, 381 and 416; A/C.3/53/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/72-S/1998/156, A/53/95-S/1998/311, A/53/129- E/1998/58, A/53/204, A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/382, 383 and 416)

4. **Ms. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan), speaking on item 102 on behalf also of Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, said that illicit drug-trafficking could even affect the political independence of States and endanger international security, and that the worldwide epidemic could be countered only by coordinated, effective action by the international community as a whole. The United Nations had an expanding role in coordinating that action, and she therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), particularly in respect of large-scale plans to eradicate illicit crops.

5. She expressed support for the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and particularly for the principle of common and shared responsibility which the Declaration contained. The countries on whose behalf she spoke intended to contribute to international efforts in the areas of demand reduction, alternative development, eradication of illicit crops, control over chemical precursors, manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, combating laundering of drug money and strengthening judicial cooperation, and were making the necessary national and regional efforts to ensure implementation of the agreed measures and coordination of their joint efforts.

6. She recalled that in October 1992, an agreement had been signed by the Ministers of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States on cooperation in combating the drug traffic, laying the legal foundations for cooperation between the various bodies responsible for internal affairs in the Commonwealth: currently, the Commonwealth's law-enforcement agencies all used the same data bank containing about 100,000 data points on individuals involved in drug-trafficking. They also had a joint collection of over 400 different narcotics, psychotropics and other virulent substances, with new samples constantly being added.

7. In May 1996 the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States had approved an intergovernmental programme of joint measures to combat organized crime and other dangerous crimes within the Commonwealth up to the year 2000. Drug-trafficking was covered by the programme. In November 1997, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth had approved a model act on drug-trafficking.

8. To ensure cooperation and exchange of experience and to improve the skills of staff, there was a constant exchange between the Commonwealth countries of regulatory and legislative documents, methodological materials and statistics. Joint study and pre- and in-service training programmes were conducted for staff of anti-drug units.

9. Currently under way was a joint operation entitled "KANAL" aimed at closing supply routes; it had succeeded

in closing thousands of international drug distribution routes. The operation had been commended at the meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) held in Vienna in September 1998.

10. The relevant subregional structures were being established, to operate in close contact with the United Nations. Specifically, in response to the deteriorating drug situation in Central Asia, in May 1996 Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and UNDCP had signed a memorandum of understanding on combating drug-trafficking and abuse. The Russian Federation had acceded to the memorandum subsequently, and a decision had been taken to hold an international drug conference in Almaty in early 1999. Also, the Commonwealth countries were taking steps to set up a network of interlinked, bilateral treaties; already, dozens of international drug distribution channels had been discovered and shut down.

11. As a result of the measures taken, it had become possible to assess and predict developments in the drug situation and to develop a unified strategy to combat international drug crime in the light of changing conditions throughout the Commonwealth.

12. She reiterated the commitment of the countries on whose behalf she spoke to the closest possible cooperation with the United Nations system and with other Member States in the war against drugs.

13. **Mr. Kongsiri** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the outcome of the war against drugs, despite many tactical and moral victories, was still far from certain: the illegal drug trade, accounting for about $400 billion or 8 per cent of total international trade, was more than enough to bail out the world's ailing economies, and like any other trade with a successful product, had adapted to changing global conditions and diversified into new markets worldwide.

14. South-East Asia, a natural geographical haven for drug production and trafficking, was vulnerable in the drug war: although some progress had been made in suppressing opium poppy and cannabis crops, local consumption was adding to the existing problems. By affecting the very fabric of society and undermining national development, drugs were of particular concern for ASEAN. Moreover, given the close links between the illicit drug trade and other transnational crimes such as money-laundering and arms smuggling, the perpetrators could pose serious political and security threats to the region.

15. It appeared that the technology and affluence that accompanied globalization had led to a proliferation in the types of drugs on the market: while plant-based drugs remained a major threat, synthetics, particularly the amphetamine-type stimulants, were rapidly increasing their market share and becoming a serious menace to the region. Such synthetics were easy to produce in clandestine laboratories, easy to traffic, highly profitable for producers and cheap for consumers. Given the wide availability of precursor chemicals and the flexibility of manufacturing techniques, controlling the supply of amphetamine-type stimulants was a daunting task. The diversion of precursor chemicals from legitimate trade and the growing illicit trade in them were major challenges in efforts to contain a relatively new but potentially even more insidious menace.

16. He stressed that the increasingly complex drug problem must be attacked on all fonts at the national and international levels, and recalled that in South-East Asia, national efforts to curb the drug problem had shown results. Also, the crop-substitution strategy there had proven successful and UNDCP, which sponsored the programme, was considering using it as a model for countries elsewhere.

17. The ASEAN Governments had given priority to a wide range of programmes including drug suppression, strict enforcement of tough drug laws, drug prevention, rehabilitation of addicts and promotion of public awareness. That diversity of approaches reflected the long-held recognition of the ASEAN Governments that the drug problem was multidimensional and that supply reduction was at best a one-sided solution: demand reduction must also be vigorously pursued as part of a balanced, multifaceted drug-control strategy.

18. At the regional level, Governments were working together to address all aspects of the drug problem; there were also bilateral cooperative arrangements between a number of ASEAN countries most affected by the drug problem, particularly those with common borders.

19. ASEAN itself had devised a number of mechanisms and projects to attack the drug problem from both the supply and the demand sides: through the annual meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, it was strengthening regional cooperation on law enforcement, drug prevention, rehabilitation, research and training. Its three-year plan of action on drug-abuse control focused especially on demand reduction; under the plan, strategies included human-resource development, information dissemination, capacity-strengthening and facilitating ratification of all relevant United Nations conventions. To add political impetus to that work, in July 1988 the ASEAN Foreign

Ministers had issued a joint declaration for a drug-free ASEAN, reiterating their determination to eliminate drugs from the region by 2020. Also, there was a complementary subregional process in place which involved cooperation under the memorandum of understanding signed by UNDCP, Cambodia, China and some ASEAN member States, namely Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

20. The efforts of the ASEAN countries and others in South-East Asia would amount to little if the international community as a whole did not make drug control a global priority, and ASEAN therefore welcomed the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, held in June 1998, particularly its recognition that supply reduction must be matched by equally vigorous efforts to reduce demand. In that task, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction in General Assembly resolution S-20/3 would be an important tool to reduce the demand for drugs by 2008 as set out by the Political Declaration adopted at the special session.

21. ASEAN's experiences in the war against drugs had shown that the drug problem ate away at the core of communities and societies, prompting the recognition that the fight could not be won without the participation of the private sector, the community and civil society, which stood to lose most from drugs and to gain most from being drug-free. ASEAN therefore intended to enhance its cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the private sector – its fellow soldiers in the anti-drug crusade.

22. While progress had been made, a considerable number of challenges remained which deserved priority attention. Funding for drug-control and rehabilitation programmes must continue in spite of the current economic crisis. Nevertheless, the Governments of South-East Asia remained firm in their resolve. On the demand-reduction side, public-awareness campaigns needed to be intensified, with more active involvement of the public and private sectors. The participation of other members of the international community in the area of resource mobilization would also be welcome.

23. In order to tackle the global problem effectively from both the demand and supply sides, closer international coordination, particularly in such areas as sharing of information and technology, law enforcement and suppression of drug-trafficking, was called for. Such efforts must, however, be based on international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter, including the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

24. Crop-substitution programmes could be enhanced by adequate market access for substitute crops and a greater impetus to alternative development. Greater international cooperation to combat the use of synthetic drugs was crucial.

25. ASEAN valued its low-standing cooperation with UNDCP and remained firmly supportive of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the twentieth special session. ASEAN would continue to live up to its obligations to fight against illicit drugs for the sake of the future of the region and the future of mankind.

26. **Mr. Nuanthasing** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the adoption at the twentieth special session of the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and action plans to enhance international drug control was a landmark of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, 1991–2000. For the first time, specific target dates had been set for putting an end to the international drug problem.

27. The Lao Government had adopted a series of drug-control measures, including the establishment of a national commission, a special police force, and the launching of a national master plan for drug control. Domestic legislation had been amended to provide harsher penalties for drug-trafficking and to prohibit opium production.

28. At the international level, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was already party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its 1972 Protocol and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and was soon to accede to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

29. Crop-substitution projects, conducted through collaboration with the United States Government, UNDP and UNDCP, among others, had led to a significant reduction in opium poppy cultivation since the early 1990s. Law-enforcement officers had worked unstintingly to arrest increasing numbers of offenders, confiscate large stocks of illicit drugs and dismantle drug refineries.

30. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the twentieth special session and was earnestly trying to translate the principles of international drug control into domestic action. Laos had therefore focused on institution-building, supply and demand reduction, and the prohibition of illicit trafficking and related crimes. The Government would rely heavily on financial and technical support from the international community to implement national drug-control projects over the next 10 years.

31. **Mr. Shihab** (Republic of Maldives) said that the target set during the twentieth special session of the General Assembly would be attainable through the continued support and cooperation of the international community.

32. With the drug menace on the rise, the least-developed States were at particular risk. As the world moved rapidly towards economic globalization and trade liberalization, the spiritual and moral dimension had been increasingly neglected; traditional, family and religious values had been ignored. It was therefore an appropriate time to reflect on current developments.

33. For developing countries, the disadvantages of globalization outweighed its advantages, primarily with respect to its negative social impact. The diversion of limited resources to fighting the drug menace presented a grave dilemma. Small island developing States with open borders required the full support of the international community in terms of resources, technical assistance and expertise to combat the drug menace and to achieve the goals set for the year 2008.

34. Maldives was fully committed to the international community's efforts to implement all measures against drug-trafficking and abuse. In the 1970s, it had embarked upon a plan to build institutional capacity and strengthen the legal framework for the application of domestic drug-control laws. In 1998, the Government had established a Narcotics Control Board and had developed a national action plan in line with international instruments calling for action at national, regional and international levels. At the regional level, Maldives fully participated in the programmes and measures undertaken within the framework of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), including accession to the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

35. Furthermore, a drug rehabilitation centre and hotline for the reform of drug offenders had recently been established. A comprehensive drug awareness programme had been launched, in association with local non-governmental organizations, to educate young people about the danger of drugs.

36. Precursor chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs had been recognized as a serious challenge to international drug-control measures. Similarly, in Maldives, tobacco consumption was regarded as no less a problem. The Government had therefore launched parallel programmes to discourage tobacco consumption alongside drug-control programmes. Public advertising of tobacco products had been banned and smoking was prohibited in government offices and public spaces. In addition, two island communities had declared themselves tobacco-free islands.

37. Drugs represented a global problem which required a global response. Developing countries needed technical assistance and resources to join the international community in their efforts to curb the menace. His delegation was fully aware of the scope of the danger posed by drug abuse and was committed to effective action against that scourge.

38. **Mr. Zmeevski** (Russian Federation) said that the abuse of drugs, illicit drug-trafficking and transnational organized crime were a serious threat not only to social progress and sustainable development in most States but were becoming a factor of destabilization in international life and a challenge to global security. That being the case, even the most persistent efforts by individual States against crime and drug addiction could come to naught if they were not backed up by appropriate, coordinated and effective international action, and in such action the United Nations could and should have its say: the Russian Federation believed that the potential of the United Nations should be exploited to the full in formulating an agreed international anti-crime strategy.

39. The Russian Federation welcomed the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution 52/90 on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/380). It welcomed also the practical orientation of the relevant United Nations organs and their desire to focus on the priority trends in anti-crime cooperation.

40. He welcomed the outcome of the seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in April 1998; the Russian Federation supported the draft resolutions the Commission had drawn up for the General Assembly, particularly those on transnational organized crime (A/C.3/53/L.3) and on preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/C.3/53/L.2).

41. The Russian Federation was prepared to continue work on drafts of a comprehensive convention against transnational organized crime and on additional draft protocols thereto, in the belief that strengthening the international legal basis was fully in line with the implementation of the 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime.

42. Naturally, universal cooperation in combating crime must be backed up by appropriate measures at the regional level; in that context, for the Russian Federation the priority was cooperation against crime within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as described by other speakers representing Commonwealth countries. The Russian Federation believed that the Commonwealth's positive experience in combating crime, like that of other regional structures, would be extremely useful for all States;

in that connection, he highlighted the important anti-crime decisions taken at the recent G–8 summit of major industrialized nations.

43. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly had adopted a number of crucial documents that demonstrated States' political will in the war against drugs and defined their strategy for the coming decade; the Russian Federation was particularly impressed by the practicality with which the final documents of the special session addressed the most acute drug problems and by the clarity with which the final and intermediate objectives had been set. Now, the main task must be to put those decisions into practice and do consistent, painstaking work, particularly in such areas as demand reduction, stopping the spread of synthetic drugs, controlling the traffic in precursors, encouraging alternative development, strengthening cooperation between law enforcement agencies and combating the laundering of drug money.

44. With their broad public, the mass media and non-governmental organizations must create a general climate of non-acceptance towards drugs. The most urgent problem was becoming one of how to hold the attention of young people, who were amongst the first to fall victim to the growing, treacherous drug craze; in that connection, the Russian Federation reiterated its support for the uncompromising position of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board that any legalization of drugs or their removal from strict State regulation was inadmissible.

45. The Russian Federation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations anti-drug structures – whose leading role in coordinating international cooperation against drugs had been confirmed by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session – and to improve their effectiveness. It welcomed also the large-scale strategic plans drawn up by the new management of UNDCP for eliminating drug cultivation worldwide.

46. The Russian Federation had always believed in expanding bilateral cooperation with UNDCP and in developing the Programme's cooperative links with the relevant government departments in Russia, and hoped that the outcome of the international conference in 1997 on cooperation with Russia on drug control would be put into practice.

47. Under a special federal programme, the Russian Government was taking active social, organizational, medical and legal steps to combat drug addiction. In April 1998, the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act had come into force. The drug law enforcement agencies had been significantly strengthened, drug treatment and rehabilitation centres were being set up and anti-drug campaigns in the mass media, educational establishments and the youth milieu had been stepped up sharply.

48. He expressed the hope that States' efforts on the national, regional and universal levels would succeed in turning the situation round and in translating into reality the slogan of the twentieth special session of a drug-free world.

49. **Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia) said that the twentieth special session on drug control had recognized the vital role of international cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking and related crimes, which posed a grave threat to individuals and States. Many countries in her own region were vulnerable to the lure of drugs, which were often seen as an easy solution to problems of economic uncertainty, social transition and new-found social freedoms.

50. Armenia was working to broaden and strengthen its legal framework pursuant to its accession to major international drug-control conventions and had incorporated eight new articles on drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking into its draft criminal code. Drug-related crime in Armenia had increased one and a half times since 1993, while the volume of narcotics seized had risen thirtyfold. Armenia had become a transit route for illicit drug-trafficking, with some 70 per cent of the drugs seized originating elsewhere. However, it lacked the resources to fully combat the phenomenon. It hoped that international cooperation would lead to decisive action, particularly in the areas of money-laundering, judicial cooperation and control of chemical substances and stimulants.

51. Armenia was formulating a comprehensive national drug-control strategy, in which education played a vital role, targeting vulnerable groups and including civil society, the mass media, non-governmental organizations and regional and international institutions.

52. Drugs posed a particular threat to Armenia in a situation of economic decline, unemployment, low wage levels and poorly developed social insurance and labour market. The situation had been exacerbated by the 1988 earthquake and by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing from Azerbaijan's continuous shelling of Armenian border regions between 1988 and 1990. A further drain on the country's financial and material resources came from the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the Azeri blockade of main communication routes, and transportation difficulties.

53. However, Armenia remained committed to drug control and was working on new policies and approaches.

It had recently established a special unit within the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate national efforts in that area.

54. *Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) took the Chair.*

55. **Ms. Akbar** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that corruption, drug-trafficking and money-laundering were a totally new phenomenon in the region, the unexpected by-product of the opening of trade borders. Caribbean Governments welcomed support from international partners to combat money-laundering, small-arms and ammunition trafficking and corruption, which they were ill-equipped to tackle on their own.

56. The Community looked forward to the elaboration by the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee of an international convention against transnational organized crime, and of international instruments to combat traffic in human beings and illicit manufacture of and traffic in firearms. It strongly recommended that resources should be allocated to allow small island developing States to participate in that work. It lauded efforts to strengthen the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, particularly the project-formulation, coordination and implementation capacities of the Centre for International Crime Prevention. It hoped that Member States would financially support the Centre, which would focus *inter alia* on elaboration of the Convention. In that connection, CARICOM would carefully review elements recommended for inclusion in model legislation on mutual assistance in criminal matters.

57. Her delegation was proud of the fact that Trinidad and Tobago had been instrumental in reopening the international debate on the establishment of the International Criminal Court and hoped that that body's future deliberations would repay the faith that States had placed in it.

58. At the regional level, work was continuing on criminal justice and crime prevention, including proposals for the establishment of a Caribbean court of justice, a regional justice-protection programme, a harmonized approach to the death penalty, the development of legal education and the practice of law, a code of judicial conduct and harmonization of laws.

59. The Caribbean Community was particularly concerned by extraregional immigration policies, whereby Caribbean nationals found guilty of criminal activities were deported to the region, despite their tenuous connection to their country of birth. No account had been taken of the extremely detrimental impact that the presence of hardened criminals would have on small, vulnerable countries with limited resources.

60. Violence against vulnerable groups was a pervasive problem, which Caribbean Governments were tackling, using a holistic approach. Telephone hotlines had been established to respond to such problems in real time, while schools were teaching young people the importance of mutual respect. Law enforcement officials, health-care providers, educational staff and community leaders were receiving training to recognize the signs of abuse, while States were developing legislation to protect the victims of violence.

61. CARICOM member States sought to engender in youth a positive vision of citizenship. Organized events examined issues such as youth empowerment, participation in civil society, substance abuse, socialization, gender relations, goal-setting, conflict resolution, culture and enterprise.

62. CARICOM looked forward to the regional preparatory meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and encouraged donors to assist developing countries, so that they could participate in the deliberations.

63. CARICOM recognized the importance of continued cooperation between the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and the International Drug Control Programme. It further welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Steering Group on Data Collection and Computerization (A/53/380, para. 24), which would help the Community improve data-collection capacities and would facilitate policy and planning activities in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice.

64. In addition to national action, the international community as a whole should recognize the need for collective responsibility in matters of crime prevention and criminal justice.

65. **Ms. Rajaonarivelo** (Madagascar) said that the international community could no longer afford to respond with platitudes to the problems of international terrorism, illicit drug-trafficking, organized crime, corruption and drug addiction. The community had to give effect to the decisions and other measures taken at different conferences, in order to counter phenomena that threatened to destabilize society and jeopardize the well-being of future generations.

66. Her delegation was convinced of the need for comprehensive and balanced national, regional and international strategies to reduce drug demand, supply, production and trafficking. International cooperation had to be improved, in order to find solutions that included

eradication of poverty and promotion of development. Moreover, development was predicated on the strengthening of political stability, the authority of the State, guarantees in the area of justice and a return to the rule of law.

67. For its part, Madagascar was engaged in talks on its accession to European conventions on judicial cooperation and on action to combat money-laundering. It had recently requested juridical assistance from UNDCP for the elaboration of legislation on money-laundering and had sought the support of the Universal Postal Union for training of postal, customs and law enforcement officials on the possible use of the postal service for drug-trafficking.

68. Madagascar had adopted new legislation on psychotropic substances and precursors, in line with the provisions of international conventions, and was preparing a national plan to reduce drug demand and eliminate illicit crop production.

69. Her delegation supported the establishment of an intergovernmental ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention against transnational organized crime and further welcomed the commitments made by African States to prevent the expansion of transnational organized crime and corruption.

70. However, financial support was vital if international and regional cooperation were to succeed. Existing regional mechanisms needed to be reviewed to facilitate greater cooperation and exchange of experience and information between judicial authorities. The international community should transfer the required technology, while the mass media should undertake relevant information and awareness-raising activities.

71. Madagascar would play its part in those efforts and hoped that governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the international community as a whole would redouble their efforts to combat the scourge of insecurity so that nations could develop in a world that guaranteed respect for fundamental human rights.

72. **Mrs. Romulus** (Haiti) said that the problems caused by drugs harmed the health and welfare of individuals and undermined the economic, political and cultural foundations of society. Crime had increased in Haiti because of the repatriation of young Haitian nationals who had been convicted of illicit drug-trafficking and drug abuse in North America. Her Government was stepping up its efforts to deal with that problem by monitoring their return and reintegrating them into Haitian society. States must consider the social factors underlying crimes linked to drug-trafficking, particularly among young people, and identify social-reintegration measures to be taken at the local, national and regional level. Joint efforts were necessary to create a better environment for young people, especially those in vulnerable groups.

73. She wished to raise a further issue. A proportion of pharmaceutical drugs sold throughout the world were fake and represented an enormous market controlled by organized crime. In spite of the efforts made by the pharmaceutical industry to deal with that problem, the police and international agencies had not found any solution.

74. Haiti, like other vulnerable island nations in the Caribbean, was making a determined effort to cope with increased drug-trafficking. Two specialized police units, the Coast Guard, an anti-drug brigade and a customs surveillance unit were involved in the campaign to combat drug-trafficking. Haitian officials and law enforcement agents had benefited from training conducted in cooperation with UNDCP. Her country had also adopted the Barbados action plan in 1996 and had participated in follow-up meetings in that regard in cooperation with other countries of the subregion, the United States of America and the European Union. In addition, the Haitian Government had carried out joint measures with the Dominican Republic to improve border surveillance and had signed a maritime cooperation agreement with the United States to combat illicit drug-trafficking.

75. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) stressed the need for joint efforts at the regional and international levels to deal with the threat caused by illicit drug-trafficking and organized crime. In that regard, his country had welcomed the holding of the recent special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, whose recommendations and declarations constituted guidelines for future action.

76. Cameroon, which had acceded to all the international drug-control conventions, was adapting its national legislation to deal with the problems caused by illicit drug-trafficking, arms-trafficking, money-laundering and related crime. His country was working actively to strengthen economic cooperation and stability in Central Africa, which required more than ever the support of the international community in its fight against drug-trafficking and organized crime. It was therefore urgent to set up a United Nations office in Central Africa to coordinate and intensify measures to deal with those problems.

77. **Mr. Al-Malki** (Bahrain) said that drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking posed an extremely grave threat to various aspects of life in society, destroying the souls of individuals, particularly youth. The international community should

spare no effort to eradicate the problem through mutual cooperation. The work of the United Nations in that domain was highly encouraging.

78. For its part, Bahrain was firmly committed to combating drug abuse and trafficking and their pernicious effects on economic and social life. All of its ministries and institutions were involved in efforts to eradicate that scourge and a special unit had been established in the psychiatric hospital to deal with substance abuse. The Ministry of Health had issued a decree prohibiting any other approach to the treatment of drug addiction, while a committee had been established within the Ministry to combat the scourge of illicit drugs.

79. A series of educational lectures had helped to raise the awareness of schoolchildren about the dangers of drugs, on the principle that prevention was better than cure. Conferences had also been held in sports and cultural clubs, focusing on the role of civil society in prevention. Relevant television and radio programmes had been broadcast to reach as large an audience as possible.

80. The Government had amended the law to provide for the death penalty or life imprisonment for trafficking offences and for the imposition of tougher fines on drug dealers. At the same time, national agencies were carrying out border monitoring and control to prevent illegal entry of narcotic substances.

81. Bahrain continued to cooperate in that area with States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States and had acceded to the relevant international conventions. It was committed to the elimination of the drug scourge and looked forward to the strengthening of international cooperation with a view to securing a better and more stable future for society as a whole.

82. **Ms. Tay** (Togo) expressed satisfaction with the recent special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which had enabled States to reach consensus on new drug-control strategies. Her Government fully supported the session's action plans and declarations, which must be implemented at the national, regional and international levels. Each State must increase its participation in the anti-drug campaign through energetic measures taking into account the new dimensions of the problem and by strengthening existing legislation.

83. Togo was fully committed to combating the drug problem and had taken numerous legislative and regulatory measures at the national, regional and international levels. Her country was a party to the three international drug-control conventions as well as major subregional instruments in that field. In March 1998 her Government had adopted, in accordance with the 1988 Convention, a new law relating to the prevention and suppression of drug-trafficking, the treatment and reintegration of drug addicts, and money-laundering. An anti-drug committee established to coordinate activities within the country was drawing up a national policy based on a global, multisectoral approach. Togo also had a drug-analysis laboratory, which had been equipped with the assistance of UNDCP. In the field of law enforcement, the police and customs services carried out drug seizure and destruction operations through their anti-drug brigades.

84. The effective implementation of that policy through an increased drug-analysis capability, the establishment of new anti-drug units, the setting up of facilities to assist drug addicts, and the organization of training programmes could not be carried out without bilateral and multilateral assistance. Accordingly, her delegation welcomed the steps taken by UNDCP to assist the countries of Africa in that field and hoped that those activities would strengthen cooperation between States aimed at combating illegal drug-trafficking.

85. **Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Azerbaijan, in his statement at the previous meeting, had made a misleading reference to Armenian armed aggression against that country. The conflict in question was between the people of Nagorny Karabakh and the Government of Azerbaijan, which refused to address the demands of that people to exercise their right to self-determination. The local Armenian population in Nagorny Karabakh had acted in self-defence in order to avoid mass deportation and genocide. Armenia and its armed forces, therefore, bore no responsibility for the territories currently controlled by the armed forces of Nagorny Karabakh. In future, the representative of Azerbaijan should use more precise terminology in his statements. It was not the first time that representatives of that country had cited so-called Armenian aggression in an attempt to explain their own economic and social problems.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.